

A FEW IDEAS
ON THE
PROBABLE ORIGIN
OF THE
HILL TRIBES OF FORMOSA.

BY
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Formosa.



IN China and in all parts of Asia, there are to be found not only in remote regions high up in the mountains, but even in less wild districts, types of men who have defied for ages the march of civilization. It would be a very difficult task to write the early history of any of these savages, or to trace their origin with any feelings of certainty. Traditionary reports, handed down from one generation to another, cannot be believed implicitly, and, if followed up, are often found to be very conflicting and almost invariably lead the enquirer into a land of doubt and speculation.

In handing to the Straits Branch of Royal Asiatic Society a short vocabulary of words used by the Tangão tribes, I have thought that perhaps a few ideas of mine on the probable origin of these tribes, who now occupy the lofty mountain ranges of North Formosa, might be acceptable. The tribes in question, who differ very materially in appearance, language, manners, &c., from the tribes of the plain called Peppowhans, have, I should imagine, the credit of being the first arrivals in this beautiful

island. Craniologists alone would be able to trace the section of the human family to which they belong, but I should be inclined to doubt if they decided that all the various tribes, numbering, I should think, over one hundred, spread over a wild and mountainous country some two hundred miles long by fifty to sixty miles in its broadest part, were descended from one pure stock. I have, for many years, held the opinion that the hill tribes are descended from a mixture of sources, but chiefly Malayan. It is very probable that the earliest inhabitants of this island were of an Indian type—short in stature, but not very dark-skinned—the descendants of a very ancient race, the origin of which is lost in obscurity. Subsequently, the Malayan element must have appeared, many centuries ago, for the Malays were found by the Spaniards as far North as the Philippines as early as A.D. 1521, at which date the principal islands were almost entirely occupied by them, and it is very likely that those islands, as well as Formosa, had been colonised by them many hundred of years before.

The various dialects spoken, especially in the Southern half of the island, lead one to suppose that the Formosan Hill Tribes are descended from several sources.

Some of the dialects contain undoubtedly words of Malayan origin, but the bulk of them do not resemble, as far as I have been able to ascertain, any language spoken in the East, and although there are many Chinese words now in use amongst the tribes residing on the Western border-land, such words are only used to describe articles obtained from Chinese hillmen, for which these border savages have no names.

It is generally supposed by those who have carefully observed the hill savages called Chin Wans that they are not direct descendants of Chinese, for they do not resemble Chinese of the present day in any point, except perhaps in the high cheek-bone, which many of them have, in common with Malays, Siamese, Japanese and other Eastern races. In many savage tribes in the North of Formosa—and all our remarks refer to them—prominent cheek-bones are not the rule, but the exception, and the contour of the face and the small round-shaped head at once proclaim them to be children of another race. Their eyes, which are straight cut, have a widely

different appearance from the eyes of Chinamen, and the way in which they wear their hair—parted in the middle, and tied at the back of the head, or worn sometimes loose, hanging down the back of the neck, but kept off the forehead by a string of beads or plain piece of hempen string—at once decides that they are not of Chinese origin, but more like Malays than any other Asiatic people.

Ever since I first made the acquaintance of the hill tribes of North Formosa—as far back as December, 1864—I have been strongly of opinion that they were, for the most part, sprung from an offshoot of the Malayan race, and it is not inconsistent to suppose that such daring pirates and buccaneers as the Malays then occupying the Malay Peninsula, the East of Borneo, and Islands belonging to the Philippine group, should have found their way in numbers to Formosa. It may be that they visited for the purpose of settling here, or simply as traders, or explorers, but it is more likely that, whilst pursuing their piratical courses in the South, their vessels were driven by storms to the coast of Formosa, and were either wrecked or found shelter there, eventuating perhaps in the survivors deciding to remain in the island.

It is only about thirteen or fourteen years ago that a number of Bashee islanders drifted in their boats to the South Cape, and were rescued by Mr. PICKERING (who was then in the South of the island) from the savages, and were sent back to their homes. Under other circumstances, they might have been compelled to take up their quarters for good in Formosa.

During my residence here, there have been numerous wrecks of Lû Chûan junks on the North-eastern and Western Coast, the crews of which, in less civilised times, might have been allowed to remain all their lives on the island, if not put to death by Chinese wreckers, who were, not many years ago, worse than savages on such occasions. In previous years, similar wrecks of Lû Chûan vessels might have taken place, and the crews may have remained in the island, and may have settled down, married, and left behind a curious mixed progeny.

Previous to my arrival here, and when living at Hongkong, it was thought by many people there, that certain vessels which had left Hongkong and other Ports in China, had been lost on the Coast

of Formosa, and that the crews and passengers, in some instances, had been murdered, but, in other cases, had been taken into the interior and there made to work underground in certain mines. In 1865, I was requested to make enquiries of the savages, wherever I might go, as to the truth of the supposition, and, after travelling all through the North of the island, and as far South as Lat. 24° , I could find no trace of mines in the interior, neither could I hear of the presence, amongst savages, of any foreigners. It is, however, very likely that people wrecked on the Western or Chinese side of the island were not only robbed, but, in many cases, murdered or starved to death. Chinese wreckers on the North and West Coast, in my own time, were not above taking advantage of the helpless state of either Lû Chûan or European wrecked mariners, and many, no doubt, would never have been again heard of, if strenuous exertions had not been made by foreign residents, who appeared on the scene, protected the crews, and, on several occasions, saved the ships from plunder and fire—the usual finale to a successful raid by Chinese wreckers.

On the savages' side of the island, or what is called the East Coast, many ships must have been lost.

Some ten or twelve years ago, an American vessel was wrecked on the South-east Coast, and the unfortunate crew was murdered. The savages were punished, to some extent, by the H. B. M.'s gunboat *Cormorant*, I think it was, and subsequently the American Flagship, with Admiral BELL on board, anchored off the place, and landed Marines and Sailors with the view of punishing the savages, but, after eight hours' march through forest and over hills, they returned without having effected much damage. On this occasion, Lieutenant MACKENZIE, U.S.N., lost his life, and several of the men suffered from effects of the sun. After this, General LE GENDRE, U. S. Consul at Amoy, proceeded across country from Takao, accompanied by Mr. PICKERING (now Protector of Chinese at Singapore), Mr. A. U. BAIN and, I believe, Mr. J. F. HUGHES of the Imperial Maritime Customs, to interview the Principal Savage Chief in that part of the island.

I believe his name was Tok i Tok. He was previously known to Mr. PICKERING and to General LE GENDRE, and being friendly

disposed towards foreigners, they succeeded in extracting a promise, that in the event of European ships landing their crews to obtain water, or in the case of wrecked mariners being cast on shore, they were, in future, to be well treated and taken care of, &c. One stipulation of Tok i Tok's was, that vessels anchoring there must fly a red flag, boats landing men and people wrecked in that neighbourhood must shew a red flag, and Tok i Tok and his tribe would not molest them. It is to be hoped that Tok i Tok and his successors will abide by the terms of this important little treaty.

There was also the case of a Lû Chûan junk lost higher up on the East Coast, the crew of which was supposed by the Japanese Government to have been murdered by the savages. The event led to a serious misunderstanding between China and Japan, which was patched up by the payment to the Japanese of a heavy indemnity.

The chances, in recent times, of wrecked people being allowed to settle in the country, especially on the East Coast, seem to have been very slight, but, in earlier times, many unfortunate castaways may have been permitted to retain a footing in the island, and may have been strong enough to establish one, and, in course of time, may have married into a tribe and become amalgamated with it.

In continuation of the subject, and bearing very closely on the general idea that the population of the island has been mixed up by the periodical advent of castaways, it is probably in the recollection of one or two residents in the island that, on a certain day not many years ago, two or three savage-looking canoes of a huge catamaran type suddenly made their appearance in the bay of Kelung, and, on being encouraged to land, out jumped a dozen or more of half-starved men, who proved to be Pellew islanders. On looking at the Map of Asia and Pacific Ocean, it will be seen what an enormous distance these men must have come in these open boats. They were a dark-skinned frizzly-haired lot, a half-starved, wild-looking set of men, and were anxious to ingratiate themselves with the friendly foreigners and inquisitive Chinamen whom they found on shore. Attempts were made to interrogate them in many different dialects, but not a single word except one struck the ear as being familiar, and that was the word

"Pellew." It was very singular that an officer on board the British gunboat then in port, who was struck with the appearance of the men, and who had been at the Pellew Islands, at once recognised their resemblance to the natives of those parts. It was subsequently ascertained that these men had been driven by bad weather from their fishing grounds, had drifted about for some time, had finally been caught in a storm lasting twelve days at a stretch, had been carried before the wind all that time, had subsisted chiefly on cocoa-nuts and fish, and had finally, after many days—how many was never definitely understood—arrived within sight of the inviting and pretty harbour of Kelung. It was very fortunate that they landed at Kelung, for they found friends who were so interested in them as to furnish them with food and clothing; a subscription was started, and they were forwarded eventually to Hongkong, then to their own country, in rather a roundabout way, but, as far as I know, they were taken back to the Pellew Islands.

It struck me very forcibly at the time that if Pellew Islanders in open boats could fetch Formosa, the island might not have looked, in former years, so far for an addition to its population. Had these men been wrecked on the East Coast, or had they sought shelter where savages lived, they might, if their lives had been spared, have settled down, they might have intermarried and assisted more than ever in mixing and confusing the breed of the island, or rather that part of it occupied by the hill tribes on the East Coast and central Mountains.

In addition to the foregoing instances of how the island population may have originated and subsequently become intermixed by various accidental causes, there is still one other important point to be considered. It is well known to Captains of vessels who have sailed past the South Cape of Formosa and along the East Coast on their way to Kelung or Tamsui, that, at no great distance from the shore, a warm current of varying breadth, called the Black Stream, or Ku-ro-si-wo, sweeps along at a good pace towards the North, assisting very materially vessels bound in that direction. In fact, in what is called the "old schooner days" (when steamers were almost unknown at Tamsui), sailing vessels were fre-

quently carried by the force of the Ku-ro-si-wo from the neighbourhood of the South Cape of Formosa to the North-east end of the island, in perfectly calm weather, without any assistance of sails. This fact is well known to mariners, and, in certain seasons of the year (North-east Monsoon), it is considered often advisable to go to the Eastward of the island rather than to beat up the Formosa Channel—the “Black Stream,” as it is called, being nothing more nor less than a strong tide running in a Northerly direction.

This current, flowing as it does past the Philippines, directly towards Formosa, possibly, in the far away past, brought to the island the first specimens of humanity. It is not unlikely that boats containing fishermen, perhaps their wives or daughters and sons, engaged in fishing on the Coast of Luzon or Mindanão or even further South, have, on numerous occasions, been carried away by the force of the Ku-ro-si-wo Northward, and, like the fishermen of the Bashee Island, been taken to the Coast of Formosa. It is indeed most probable that the force of the storm drove the Pellew Islanders right into this current, for, without the assistance of some such aid, it is hard to understand how, after the gale had abated, they were able to propel their canoes to such a distance as Kelung. It will be seen from the foregoing, that a separate creation of man was not absolutely necessary in this Eden of islands.

On questioning the aborigines of the hills, as to where they originally came from, they invariably pointed Southwards, remarking that the place was distant very many “sun-go-downs,” meaning many days’ journey Southward. The expression “Jib wâ gêi,” our day of twenty-four hours, timing from sunset to sunset, is a common mode of expressing the distance, or time it would take to go from one place to another. I feel convinced that the hill tribes originally came from the South and gradually extended themselves Northward, keeping always to the mountains in preference to the plains. I do not believe that any body of them were the offspring of men from the Eastern and Northern islands of Mei-a-co-si-ma, Lû Chû, or Japan, although it is said that a Japanese Colony once existed at Kelung, and at a time when perhaps the savages, and certainly the Peppowhans, resided there (as many of the latter do to this day) though their numbers are very insignificant.

If Northern castaways or colonists came in former times to Formosa, the Lû Chûan or Japanese type would appear in some shape to the present moment, but all the tribes of the North which have come under my observation, resemble the Japanese and Lû Chûans in nothing, but their short stature, and dark straight hair : and in their mode of dress, or manner of arranging their hair, there are no similarities whatever. Japanese tattoo their bodies, and so do savages, to some extent, but, as far as I have been able to judge, there is no resemblance even in this point. The knowledge possessed by certain tribes of *weaving*, and of the art of embroidering their coats, of carving their pipes, scabbards of their knives, &c., would make one believe that the first occupants of this island brought with them certain arts, not generally known by uncivilised peoples of a low type. If the art of weaving, possessed not only by the Peppowhan women, but by the hill squaws, was not introduced by the original or subsequent settlers, but was discovered by the aborigines themselves, it goes to prove that, although wild and untamed as they are, and to this day without any written language, they have at least inventive powers of no mean order. The knowledge of weaving may have been acquired first of all from the Dutch or Spanish, both nations having had a footing in the island in the 16th century, but it is more likely to have been learned from the Dutch, who had extensive settlements in the South, about Taiwanfoo, and who, it is said, were on very friendly terms with the Peppowhans (lit., half-cooked or half-civilised natives), about whom I shall have to write separately at some future date. If the knowledge of weaving was acquired by the Peppowhans first, it might have been imparted to the hill tribes by women taken prisoners in tribal battles, which must have been frequent between the plain and hill savages in earlier times.

The loom and shuttle used by the women are of the most primitive shape and construction, but the work turned out in the shape of bleached hempen cloth, and which I have seen in the process of manufacture, is more finely made and far more durable than the Chinese made cloth. Some of the dresses, the mantilla of the women especially, are of fine and close texture, of well-bleached hemp, and are embroidered with strips of scarlet and blue Long

Ells, obtained in barter from Chinese bordermen, when friendly relations exist between the aborigines and the wily invader. Their curious taste in colours and the shape of their clothes would lead one to conclude that such fashions came from the Philippines. The mantilla, often worn over the head by old women, at other times over the shoulders, must have come from the South, and the cut of the lower garment, worn at times by both men and women, very much resembles the *sarong* of the Malays, only it is not worn so long as the *sarong*.

(*To be continued.*)

LIST OF WORDS OF TANGÁO DIALECT, NORTH FORMOSA.

N.B.—Words or syllables with ˘ over them mean that quick pronunciation is required.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Tribe of Tangáo.*</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
I.—		
Man	Kaw tōh hêi	Meaning "One Man." English pronunciation of man, "Hay."
Woman	Kâ nî dîin	Often, Kâ nî dî it.
Husband	Bâd li kûi	
Wife	Kûi ying kâ nî dîin	
Father	Yâ bâ	
Mother	Yâ yâ	
Boy	Wû lâ kî or Wû lâ kê.	
Girl	Wû lâ kî kâ nî dîin	
II.—		
Teats	Môbû	
Blood	Nâm mû and Lâ-bu.	
Lips	Pârâhûm	
Knee	Târri	Strong accent on double r.
Ear	Pâ pâck	
Eye	Lão yiek	English pronunciation, "Low yěck."

*Accent on last syllable.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Tribe of Tangão.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Eyelids	Pû ôu lû lão yiek	
Finger	T'lú liěng	
Foot	Kâh pâhl	
Hair (human)	Sĩ niũ rồok	"Pi" is often affixed, in that case accent on penultimate.
„ (of other animals)	Kâb boek	
Hand	Kâb bâh	
Head	Tồh noch	"Noch" like Scotch "Loch."
Mouth	Lâ quâck	Often, Lâ quâss.
Nail	Kâh mîl	
Nose	Ngỗ hỏh	
Skin	Kiâ hêll	Strong accent "Hêll."
Tongue	Mâ lê	
Tooth or Teeth	Gâm noch	"Noch" like Scotch "Loch."
III.—		
Bird	Kâ pâu niěk	
Fish	Ngo lê	
Capon	Gâ lûn bûd gâk yềng â tâh	Lit., Cut-stones hen.
Fowl (Hen)	Yềng â tâh	
Partridge	Yềng â tâh bắd lâ hủi	
IV.—		
Alligator	Does not exist in Fer- mosa,

<i>English.</i>	<i>Tribe of Tangão.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Turtle	Kû kâl âkût	
Deer	Mâ gâu lock, <i>or</i> Mâ ngâ rû, <i>also</i> Mâh hâh.	
Dog	Hû yin	
Elephant	Does not exist in For- mosa.
Pig (Wild Hog)	Bî wâk bâd lâ hûi	
Pheasant	Chiâ kong	
Rhinoceros	Does not exist in For- mosa.
Squirrel	Kão lì	
Flying Squirrel	Kão lì bâhd lâck kâh	
Monkey	Liong-ai	

V.—

Flower	Pâ pâ	
Tree fern	Nû henúg	Strongprolongedaccent on last syllable.
Bamboo	Tâh kân	
Rattan	Kwâ yû	
Tree	Po kieng kûnnûs	"Kûn" like "koon."
Wood	Hûn niêk	"Hûn" like "hoon."
Timber	Po kieng hûn niêk	
Camphor Tree	Pâ lâh kûi po kieng kûnnûs.	

VI.—

Banana	Kô kô
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<i>English.</i>	<i>Tribe of Tangão.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Orange	Ũtack	
Rice	Mân mê	
VII.—		
Hemp	Hâb-ão	
Indigo	Lão-whâ	
Potatœe	Mâu gâh hêi	
Tobacco	Tâ mâ kê	Both Savages and Pep- powhans use this word.
Sugar	Kum siã	
Grass	Kâm mân	
VIII.—		
Gold	Hâd lâk ît	
Gold Dust	Bû nâkî hâd lâk ît	
Silver	Pîd lâh	Often, Pî lâh.
Copper	Kû lô whân mâck tâ lâh	
IX.—		
Arrow	Pîn nî lawk	
Bow	Hûn nûk	
Boat	Kâh sô	
Mat	Loh pêi	
Gun	Pâh tûs	Chinese hillmen always make mistake and pronounce "Pah tût."
Powder	Kão bûdî	

<i>English.</i>	<i>Tribe of Tangão.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
Large Knife	Lá tao	
Arrow belt	Tû bieng	Made of hide generally.
Waist cloth	Hâb bock	Sort of girdle of hempen cloth between which and the body the La-lão (knife) is inserted.
To shoot or fire gun	Mûn pâh tûs	

X.—

Mountain	Bâd lâ hûi	Meaning hill or wild.
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XI.—

Earth	Ūrão	Meaning, mud or dirt. No name for the world.
Sky	Kân yât	
Sun	Whâ gêi	Pronounce "Wha gay."
Moon	Pû yât ching	
Star	Pû âng âh	

XII.—

Thunder	Bî sũ	
Lightning	Awe toh pûn niek	Meaning God or Devil of Fire.
Wind, Air	Tû long	
Clouds	Shin lock or Bien gât	
Rain	Kwâ lâck	
Fire	Pûn niek	"Pun" pronounced like "Poôn."
Water	K'tsiâ or Kût siâ	The "kût" short.

*English.**Tribe of Tangão.**Remarks.*

XIII.—

Day	Jib wha gei	Meaning “sungo down” or one day.
Night	Bâd lâh hâng ân	
To-day	Pî lão	Pronounce “Pee low.”
To-morrow	Sâh sân	
Yesterday	Sêh sân hêi lâh	“Hêi lah” pronounced “Haylah.”

XIV.—

To live	Kî ân or Mâh kî
To kill	Kû tân
Dead	Hô kê it
Cold	Hâh yâck
Hot	Kî lok
Large	Hû pâh or Hû 1 âk.
Small	Chî bûk
Black	Mâ kê lock
White	Pâ lâ kûi
Green	Kâ lâ siek
Red	Mâck tâ lâh

XV.—

Come	Mwâ or Măa	Mwâ lût ní = Come here.
Go	Hâh tâck also Kwâ yât.	

<i>English.</i>	<i>Tribe of Tangão.</i>	<i>Remarks.</i>
East } Drink }	Mâu niek or Ngun niek	} For to eat, to drink, and to smoke, the same word is used.
Sleep	Mâ bêl	"Bêl" pronounced like "Way."
Awake	Ongât mâ bêl	

XVI.—

1	Kaw tôh	
2	Sâ dîng or Sâ ying.	
3	Chiu gân	
4	Pãi yât	
5	Mân gân	
6	Tai yiu	
7	Pî tu	
8	Sî pât	
9	Tai sô	
10	Mou pôh or Pong.	
11	Mou pôh kaw tôh or Pong kaw tôh.	
12	Mou poh sâ dîng or Pong sâ ying.	
20	Sâ dîng mou pôh or Sâ ying pong.	
30	Chiû gân mou pôh or Chiu gân pong.	
100	Kaw toh kê pût	"Put" pronounced as in "Foot."